

Message Text

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20

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CEA-01

CIEP-01 STR-04 /092 W

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R 161649Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1193

INFO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 07453

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, RH

SUBJECT: LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT

REF: LONDON 7270 (NOTAL)

1. DURING CALL ON ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY AT FCO, NORMAN ASPIN, ON MAY 16, AMBASSADOR HINTON AND EMBOFF WERE TOLD ABOUT CURRENT ATTITUDE OF ANC TOWARD RESUMING TALKS WITH IAN SMITH AND GIVEN RUNDOWN OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. AS REPORTED LONDON REF-CONFIDENTIAL

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TEL, ANC LEADERS, NDABANINGI SITHOLE AND JOSHUA NKOMO,

MET WITH FCO OFFICIALS EARLIER IN WEEK. NKOMO MET FONSEC CALLAGHAN, BUT BRITISH WERE UNABLE, THEY SAY, TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENT FOR SITHOLE, WHICH IS NOT SURPRISING IN VIEW OF HMG'S EVIDENT PREFERENCE FOR MORE MODERATE NKOMO. ANC LEADERS REPEATED TO BRITISH OFFICIALS THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS THAT THEY SEE NO POSSIBILITY FOR TALKING WITH SMITH NOW. ACCORDING TO ASPIN, NEITHER OF THE ANC LEADERS SEEMED PARTICULARLY UPSET OVER SMITH'S INTRANSIGENT ATTITUDE AND APPEARED TO GIVE FIRST PRIORITY TO SETTling THE LEADERSHIP QUESTION IN THE ANC. NKOMO IS PUSHING FOR AN EARLY ANC CONGRESS TO ELECT A NEW LEADERSHIP, AS HE BELIEVES HE WOULD BE THE WINNER, WHILE SITHOLE IS ARGUING FOR POSTPONEMENT BECAUSE HE ALSO APPEARS CONVINCED THAT NKOMO WOULD GET THE NOD. BRITISH EXPECT PRESIDENT KAUNDA TO CONTINUE TO EXERT STRONG PRESSURES FOR SETTLEMENT OF LEADERSHIP QUESTION AND FORCING UNITY ON ANC. BRITISH ALSO FEEL THAT IAN SMITH NOT INTERESTED IN TALKING AT THIS TIME. SITHOLE AND NKOMO BOTH AGAIN URGED BRITISH TO CALL CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE AND WERE TOLD SAME THING COMMON WEALTH LEADERS WERE TOLD AT KINGSTON (LONDON REFTel). IN SUM, ASPIN SAID FACT THAT THERE IS NO MOVEMENT AT THIS TIME IS NOT PARTICULARLY DISTURBING. WHAT CONCERNS BRITISH MORE IS ANC FAILURE TO ATTAIN REAL UNITY AND DEVELOP A NEGOTIATING PROGRAM SO THEY CAN "START TALKING LIKE THE NEXT GOVERNMENT." THIS MUST BE DONE BEFORE BRITISH CAN CALL CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT PRESS REPORTS THAT COMMONWEALTH LEADERS HAD PROMISED TO OFFSET COSTS FOR BOTSWANA TO ENCOURAGE BOTSWANANS TO CUT RHODESIAN RAIL LINK WITH SOUTH AFRICA, ASPIN SAID NO DEFINITE PROMISE HAD BEEN MADE. NYERERE SUGGESTED THE IDEA TO WILSON AT KINGSTON, AND WILSON HAD REPLIED TO EFFECT THAT IT SOUNDED LIKE A GOOD IDEA, BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT OTHER THAN TO STUDY NYERERE'S SUGGESTION.

3. AT END OF CONVERSATION, ASPIN SAID HEAD OF RHODESIAN DEPARTMENT AT FCO HAD RECEIVED SERIES OF INQUIRIES ON MAY 15 CONCERNING REPORT THAT IAN SMITH WAS IN LIBREVILLE ENROUTE TO PARIS. AFTER CHECKING, FOREIGN OFFICE LEARNED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT STORY HAD ORIGINATED FROM MEMBER OF PRESIDENT BONGO'S ENTOURAGE IN LIBREVILLE WHO SAID SMITH WOULD BE COMING TO GABON. REUTERS AND DAILY MAIL IN PARIS HAD STORY, BUT DECIDED NOT TO PRINT IT BECAUSE IT SEEMED TOO UNLIKELY.

RICHARDSON

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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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